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BERLIN TASK FORCE

Minutes and Assignments of August 18 Meeting.

The INR briefing reported tightening of Soviet and East German controls in Berlin. West Berlin vehicles can now enter East Berlin at only three points, they are subject to stringent controls and mostly being turned back. Heavier controls are in force on the S-bahn, particularly at the Friedrichstrasse station, on movements of West Berliners and foreigners. Overnight, a six-foot concrete wall had been erected across the Potsdamerplatz. Ulbricht is scheduled to make a major policy speech tonight, and the Bundestag will meet today.

On the international scene, the Communist parties in several countries have embarked on a coordinated campaign announcing that the peace treaty between USSR and East Germany will be signed on schedule.

A TASS assessment of probable U.S. reactions to Soviet-East German actions in Berlin has appeared. They think that the U.S. will emphasize the themes of national liberation and peaceful coexistence; that we will attempt to build up the West and denigrate the East; that we will take the line that the competition between the two camps has clearly been decided in favor of the West, with Soviet recognition of failure in East Germany publicly demonstrated by their recent actions in Berlin; that we will take the foregoing story to the entire world; that we will continue our military build-up in Berlin and West Germany; and that we will endeavor to appear as the champion of national liberation and of peaceful coexistence--a role which the Soviets have attempted to usurp for themselves in the past.

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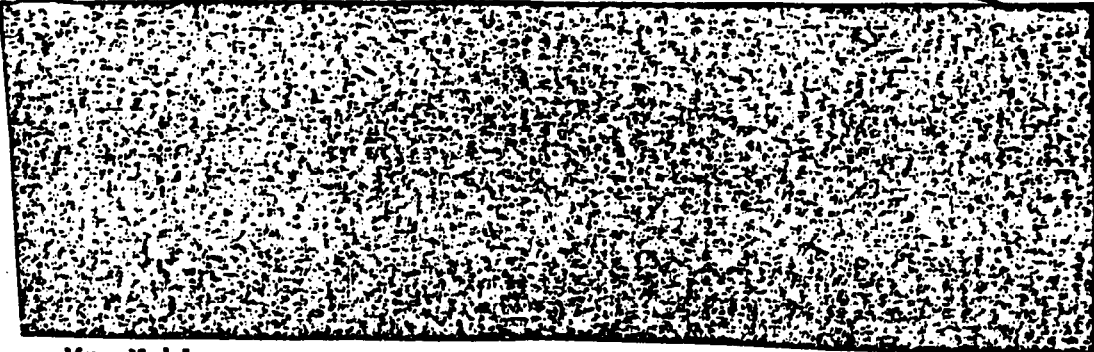
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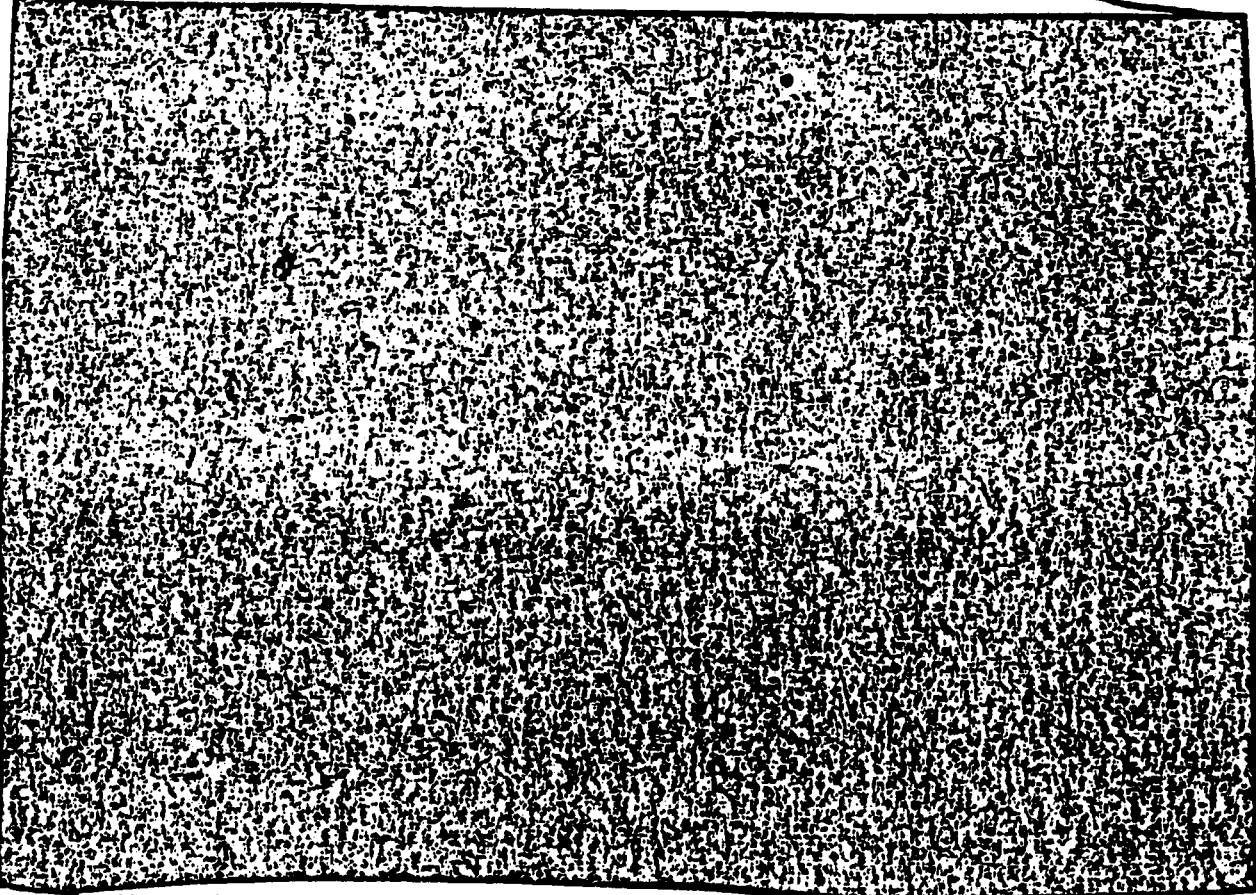
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Mr. Kohler requested that immediate telephone calls be placed to Ambassadors Bruce and Gavin to determine what reactions have been received to the notes we sent last night. This was done.



Mr. Kohler asked for a paper on possible Soviet reactions to our military actions during the course of the day, to be prepared by INR.

He said

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He said that Mr. Bohlen and himself had already expressed their views in the White House. [REDACTED]

Mr. Kohler also requested a paper on the basis on which we say it is illegal for East German forces to be in Berlin, as soon as possible. GER was given principal responsibility for this.

Mr. Kohler said the Vice President and General Clay are leaving this evening, to stop in Berlin, and to deliver the President's letter to Brandt. The letter was now being rewritten by Mr. Bundy in the White House. [REDACTED] Mr. Cash and Mr. Cox will be accompanying them.

The Secretary was quite disturbed by reports out of London this morning that we are preparing a negotiating presentation to be presented to the Soviets at this time. He has called for a meeting with the press at 11:45 to correct this. He wanted Mr. Davis and Mr. Cox to be present, among others.

[REDACTED]

It was agreed that we should step up all our contingency planning, [REDACTED]

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